589 Even of her married life begins. The man and woman live together peaceably enough as
592 a rule, each attending to his own sphere of work. The man builds the house, the woman
mends the fence; she sweeps and works, she is the bearer of wood and drawer of water. The
man hunts, fishes, makes mats, basketry, the grain store, game traps, and bark-cloth; he
looks after the tobacco, and makes the mud, while his wife leaves the loam. He it is who
fashions the gourd vessels and carves the spoons, while the woman is the potter (Pl. III, 4)
and pipe-maker. Together they hoe and together they harvest, but to the women falls the
monotonous drudgery of pounding and sifting the corn for flour.

597 The Vai have a custom like that of the Anyanja. A sister brings to the house of the
newly wedded pair a log of green wood from a mimosa tree which is very hard; the log
[523] may be two feet in diameter and four feet long. Should the bride not become pregnant
before it is burned away, the husband is laughed at and they may both be teased by having
[608] many logs brought to the house. A man who has no children is much despised and there
is a saying, "He must have eaten some ground-nuts," punning on the word for a black-
skinned variety of ground-nut, *chirabanda*, a word which also means sterility. An important
[557] man may, with the consent of his wife, introduce some male friend into the house, any
children born in consequence being claimed as the husband's. He usually chooses some
friend from a distance to obviate any misunderstanding springing up between him and the wife.
Two married couples may, all consenting, exchange consorts for the night, but they never
live together like this for long periods.

582 There is one well-defined marriage taboo; a man may not marry a woman of his own
clan. In the old days, he was also restricted to his own tribe, except in the case of slave
[541] wives and wives by capture. Since the clan is inherited from the mother,[1] a man may not
[587] marry the daughters of his maternal aunts, but he may marry his other female cousins.
He may not marry two sisters nor a deceased wife's sister; neither do two brothers marry
two sisters.

595 The number of wives is limited only by the husband's ability to provide for them. In
addition to free wives, a man might formerly have a number of slave wives. The head wife
is called *kapolo*, the other wives, *manyumba*. The word given by Mandawaki, *akapolo*,
meaning the junior wives, is a Chinyanja word and, I think, wrongly applied.

592 It has been said that a man always marries into the village of his wife. For this reason,
[548] female children are always prized as it means an increase to the number of able-bodied
men added to the village. In rare cases, the wife might be taken to the husband's village,
[583] as in the Anyanja practice.[2] This, of course, is true in the case of chiefs and headmen. Here,
we may also note that no payment is made for the wife and no dowry is received with her.

597 To revert to betrothal, occasionally the spouses will not agree to the marriage and a
613 runaway match takes place, but in the end, the marriage is usually regularized by the
spouses coming to an agreement. If, however, the woman has in the meantime become

[1] Vide infra, p. 200. [2] Op. cit., p. 191. [3] Stemmer, op. cit., p. 200.